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ABSTRACT

At present, teachers' inservice training assumes an enormous importance in the realization of educational reforms in European countries. This paper describes several descriptive models for teacher training. Then, the development of inservice training is examined according to the "change paradigm" and the "problem-solving paradigm" in such a way as to contribute to educational innovation and to the resolution of concrete problems that teachers face in their professional lives. Two specific domains on which inservice training should focus are discussed: teachers' motivation and teachers' group work. Both contribute to the personal and professional development of teachers. (Contains 64 references.) (Author/ND)

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PERSPECTIVES FOR THE INSERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' inservice training assumes, in the present, an enormous importance in the process of realization of the Educational Reforms in the European countries.

Having in mind the descriptive models of teachers' training, one considers that inservice training must be developed according to the "change paradigm" and the "problem-solving paradigm", in such a way on to contribute to the educational innovation and to the resolution of concrete problems that teachers face in their professional lives.

Taking this into account, one distinguishes two large domains, which inservice training should focus: the teachers' motivation and the teachers' group work. Both contribute to the personal and the professional development of teachers.

KEY-WORDS: Teacher Motivation; Teacher Education; Professional Development; Teacher Participation.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE INSERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS*

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1. Teachers' training according to descriptive models.

Until the 70's the main concern of the European countries was the extension of the compulsory scholarity. Therefore, the number of schools, students and teachers were increased. Nowadays the main concern is the teaching quality. Different authors consider the training of teachers one of the major questions, as far as the quality of teaching is concerned, due to the fact that the fulfilment of Education Systems Reforms' in the European countries depends directly on the teachers' involvement in their realization (Abreu, 1983; Cortesão, 1990; Nogueira, Rodrigues & Ferreira, 1990; Nóvoa, 1991; Patrício, 1986; Ribeiro, 1989; Teodoro, 1990).

Concerning the training of teachers, one is able in distinguish between the initial training for preservice teachers and the continuous training for inservice teachers. It is obvious that these two domains should have different aims and strategies. On the one hand, the future teachers, who are in their initial training, should be faced with the perspective and antecipation of their professional future, in order to clarify their expectations about possible problematic future situations (Cruz, 1989; Gonçalves, 1986). On the other hand, inservice teachers should analyse and discuss practical problems related to their professional life.

At the same time, one can also distinguish two large areas, considering the training of teachers: one is the educational training, which refers to the supposed competencies that the teachers should have in the field of the Educational Sciences; the other area concerns the specific training which the teacher should possess with the purpose of transmiting his knowledge to his students. The

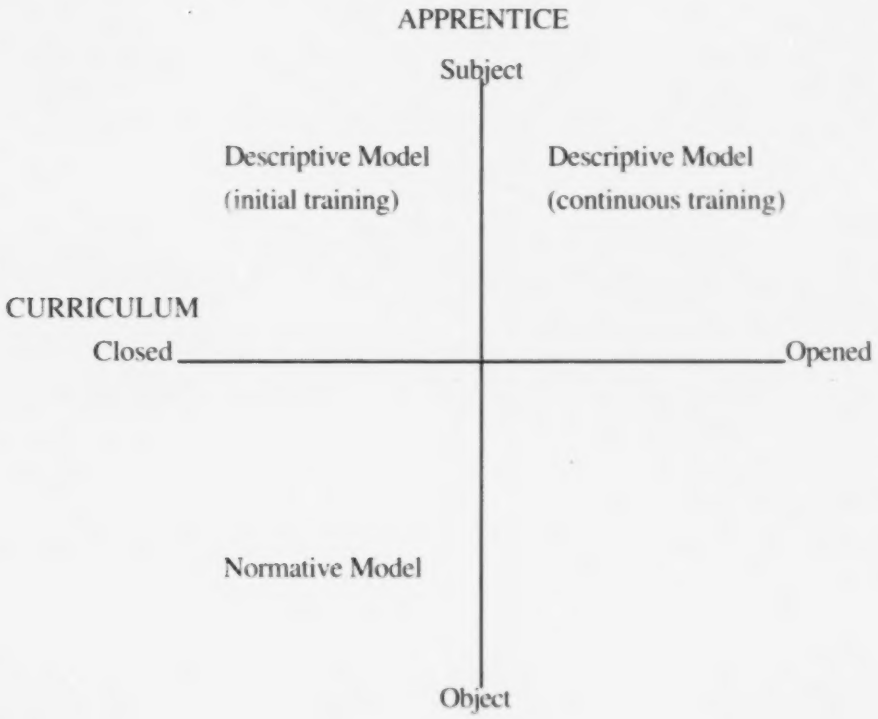
results of a previous research (Jesus, Oliveira, Sousa & Carvalho, 1991) showed that higher is the professional experience of the teachers higher useful is considered the educational training. However, this is not applicable to the specific training of teachers. Such results suggested that the professional experience, by itself, does not enable teachers to learn how to solve all their professional problems. As a result, a continous training is required. Nevertheless, a specific training seems unnecessary, because the teacher only rarely feels himself incompetent when he has to transmit his knowledge. On the contrary, as the studies about the management of indiscipline revealed, the teacher may very often become aware of his lack of competency, not only in the use of strategies when teaching his students (how to do), but also in the relationship achieved towards his students (how to be). Thus, the study, which we are looking forward to developing, concerns the continuous training of teachers at the educational level.

First of all, I would like to begin by pointing out that teachers' training should be understood by a descriptive model, and not by a normative one. The normative model assumes that there are typical "good teachers" behaviours and skills, and that teachers' training should make sure that all teachers aquiree those qualities. This model gave rise to a continuous comparison between the personal qualities of the teacher and the ones demanded by the normative "good teacher". The teachers' vocational self-evaluation is a result of the comparation between his similitudes with the normative "good teacher". This is a factor of teacher burnout.

The training of teachers should be understood by the descriptive model (Esteve, 1992), because there are numerous ways of being a good teacher. Only at specific situations the teacher can decide how to act, in a coerent way of his own. As Combs, Blume, Newman & Wass (1979) proposed, a good teacher is, first of all, a unique personality that has learned the best way of making a good using of his personal qualities. According to this model, the teachers' training should promote the teachers' self-knowledge and self-confidence.

Estrela (1991) distinguished two main vectors in the teachers' training: one concerning the apprentice, and the other concerning the contents of the curriculum. In the initial training the curriculum is defined previously, and the preservice teacher can be considered either as an object, by the normative model, or as a subject, by the descriptive model. As far as the continuous training's concerned, the curriculum should be opened, that is, the teachers should take part in the contents and, moreover, the teachers' own needs and real problems should be taken into account (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Vectors at the teacher training (adaptation from Estrela, 1991, 13).



Therefore, the inservice teachers' training should be developed according to the "change paradigm" (Fullan, 1982), which will enable more creativity and innovation in schools, as well as to the "problem-solving paradigm" (Éraut, 1985), which will contribute to the resolution of concrete problems that teachers face in their professional lives. It should not be developed by the "defect approach" (Jackson, 1971), used only to fulfil amends in the preservice training.

Taking into account the complexity of teachers' functions, namely the ones developed in the classroom, there are always problems to solve, and the training of teachers should help teachers to understand and to answer the real professional problems (Esteves, 1991; Ribeiro, 1989).

The continuous training of teachers should be seen as a way of vocational development and also as a way of perceiving his self-efficacy, which will contribute to the personal and professional development (Jesus, 1992c). It should not be considered only as a way of institutional certification for career advancement.

Taking into account the descriptive model oriented to the resolution of real problems, it seems that the continuous teachers' training should pay attention to two main domains: the motivation for teaching and the teachers' group work.

2. Vectors for inservice training of teachers.

2.1. The promotion of motivation for teaching.

Presently, one of the major problems in our schools is the lack of motivation of teachers (Braga da Cruz, Dias, Sanches, Ruivo, Pereira & Tavares, 1988; Lens, in press; Jesus & Abreu, 1994). This fact has obviously serious implications, concerning for instance the students' motivation to do their school tasks (Abrami, Leventhal & Perry, 1982; Abreu, 1988; Combs et al., 1979; Czikszentmihalyi, 1982; Deci & Ryan, 1982; Lens & Decruyenaere, 1991), the fulfilment of educational reforms (Popper, 1989), as well as the personal satisfaction of the teachers with their profession (Chase, 1985; Esteve, 1984; Husczo, 1981; Miskel, DeFrain & Wilcox, 1980; Mitchell, 1974; Nóvoa, 1991; Reyes, 1990; Vila, 1988; Williams, 1978).

There are many teachers who choose their profession because they believe in an idealistic conception of teaching and in an idealistic relationship with the students, that has nothing to do with the real conditions of teaching in ours

schools (Bayer, 1984; Martínez, 1984; Varela & Ortega, 1984). The intervention should focus the stability of teachers' vocational way and the realism of teachers' professional goals.

The retrospective of the vocational way corresponds to the analysis of the factors that contribute to the professional option, if these are realistic factors or not, and if this is a first option or, on the contrary, is only a not very bad professional alternative. Furthermore, it is important to analyse the perspective of the vocational way, that is, if the teacher is decided to continue to be a teacher or if he prefers to have another occupation. If the reexamination of vocational course shows a low motivation for teaching, it is important to lead him to the possibility of leaving his profession and to explore others professional possibilities and the consequences of each one of these options. This strategy is used in the career management and enables the teacher to face a more realistic evaluation of the professional alternatives, because the teacher has to evaluate the caracteristics of those professions and the possibilities of reaching them. As a consequence, the teacher can decide to leave teaching and implement action plans in order to find another profession or, on the contrary, can come to the decision that being a teacher is his best option, developing a more positive or optimistic attitude about this profession.

For instance, one can suppose a teacher of biology that would like to work in an industry of food products' because it would allow him to do research activities. Nevertheless, it is possible that he can not aware of the fact that this profession do not permits so much interpersonal relationships as the one, and the relationship with other people are important for him. Moreover, these research activities are restricted to the aims and products of these industry. Furthermore, this kind of industry is far away from his city, and he does not want to leave his family. In these case, the teacher sees that it makes no sense to continue his professional "fantasy" and he tends to revalorize the potencial goals of the teaching job. Another example, is the one of the teacher who intends initialy to leave his profession because of his poor salary. However he can begin to

desvalorize the salary and to revalorize the job stability, because in well-payed-jobs there are more professional competivity and mobility, which reduces the job's garanty.

2.2. The promotion of teachers' group work.

The communication or the relationship between teachers is another important point in the inservice educational training. Teachers' group work can not be only focus in the curricular contents, by meetings of teachers of the same subjects, with the purpose of analysing the programs fulfilment, or by meetings of teachers of the same classes, having only in mind the classification of the students' knowledge.

Presently, it makes no sense to base the school education on curricular contents (Jesus, 1989), and the teachers are faced with new problems, namely the students' indiscipline (Jesus, 1991a; Jesus, 1992b; Villa, 1998). Nevertheless, for many teachers, the discussion about students' indiscipline is still tabu. These teachers prefer to hide themselves under the "mask" of the normative model, trying to show their colleagues the image of the "good" teacher (Bayer, 1984; Vonk, 1983). The isolation, inhibition and routine are the most proeminent characteristics of the teachers' burnout (Esteve, 1992). On the other hand, there are many teachers who discuss the students' indiscipline, but only as a way of expressing lamentation, accusing and categorizing the students. This kind of attribution and discurse does not allows them to solve the professional problems that teachers face today, namely the problems of indiscipline, desmotivation and reprovation of students.

The importance of the group to the resolution of problems has been showed at the Clinical Psychology (Gauquelin, 1980) and at the Organizational Psychology (Thévenet, 1989). Nevertheless, in the field of the Educational Psychology the attempt to solve the problems is made by each teacher, on his own, and does not take into account the opinions of their colleagues (Delaire & Ordronneau, 1989). The communication between teachers could be the way (or

the obstacle, in case it does not exist) to achieve the professional development and fulfilment of teachers. Teachers must be able to communicate sincerely, to present theirs own dificulties and fears, to analyse their owns practices and attitudes, to share their professional experiences, and to define common strategies for the resolution of their problems (Abraham, 1982; Amiel-Lebigre & Pichot, 1980; Nóvoa, 1991; Santiago & Oliveira, 1990; Vonk, 1983). Thus, the teacher is not only a means to the transmission of the curricular contents, but also a person with professional goals, who seeks professional fulfilment. The communication between teachers can function as a way of awareness of new practices, new expectancies, as well as more professional motivation. An educator of teachers should follow this model and should promote and coordenate the communication between teachers in the schools.

3. A developmental way for the education of teachers.

Living in an historical period, which can be characterized as a period of constant psychosocial changes, the school is no longer the place exclusively used to the transmission and reception of encyclopedic knowledge (Jesus, 1989). In order to face the new demands of the teaching profession, a feeling of competency is required. Therefore, the teachers' self-efficiency and satisfaction should constitute the main aims of the continuous teachers' training.

Nevertheless, the continuous training of the four millions of teachers in the European Community shows some differences according to their own Education Systems. However, the participation of teachers in their own training and the teachers' group work seem to be shared strategies of teachers' training.

The continuous training of teachers should not be mistakes with disorganized sessions, characteristic of the normative models, in which teachers only take part with the purpose of developing their curriculum. On the contrary, the continous training of teachers demands quality and should give an answer to the real needs of the teachers aiming towards the promotion of a higher self-confidence and self-efficiency of the teachers. Only by this way teachers'

education could achieve educational innovation and development both personal and professional of teachers.

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